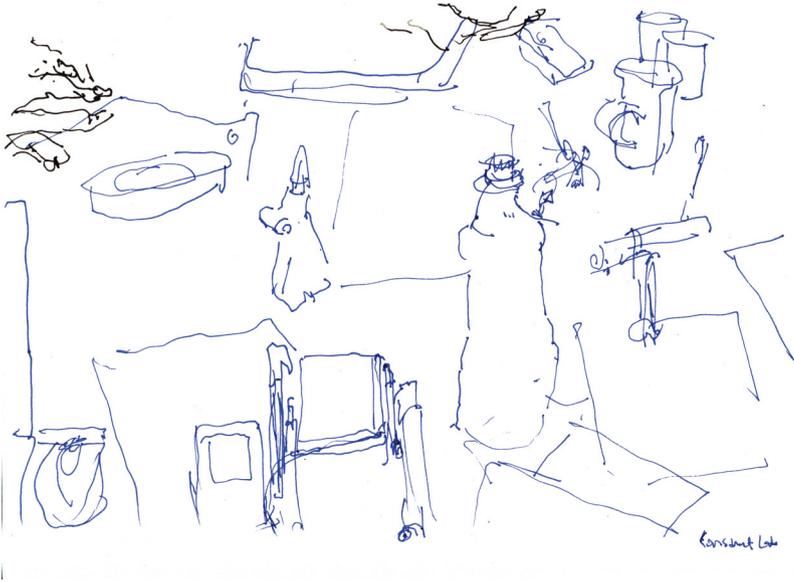


personal observations from
*Building a Proposition for Future
Activities 2017*

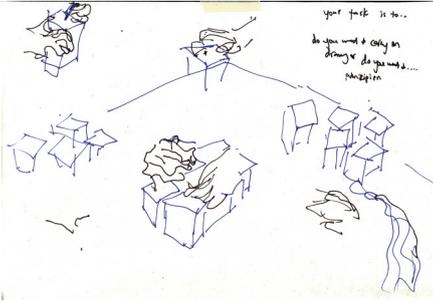


**#2: floating between Atelier Bow-
Wow, Bromsky Architekten,
Assemble and ConstructLab**

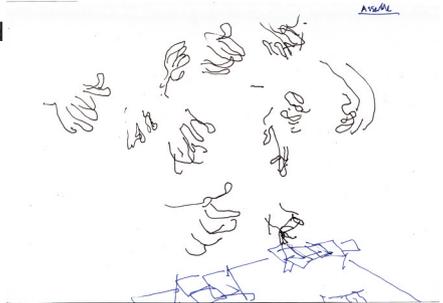
At the start of September 2017, I joined the summer school 'Building a proposition for future activities', organised by the HafenCity University at Poppenbüttel, Hamburg. A design experiment where five architecture studios were invited to set up studio for a week in a large tent the size of the final project, each randomly assigned a portion of the participants from diverse backgrounds: architecture/design students local and from around the EU, craft/building students from Hamburg, potential future inhabitants with relevant skills (engineering and architecture) in exile from their home countries, some interested local residents.

Assemble

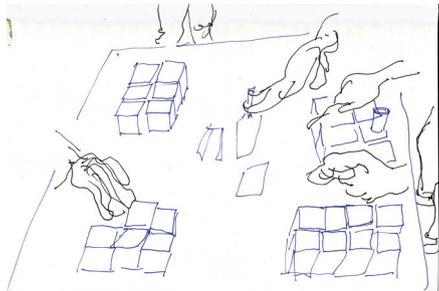
when I joined Assemble, they had already brainstormed some rough ideas, and made a blackboard table with grids drawn on it. One of the students from the technical school was outside cutting blocks. One of the girls said to me, 'Your task is to label the blocks using these coloured tapes, each representing a different function: toilet, kitchen, so on...' There was not enough colours for the different rooms, so I was asked to draw a symbol for each space.

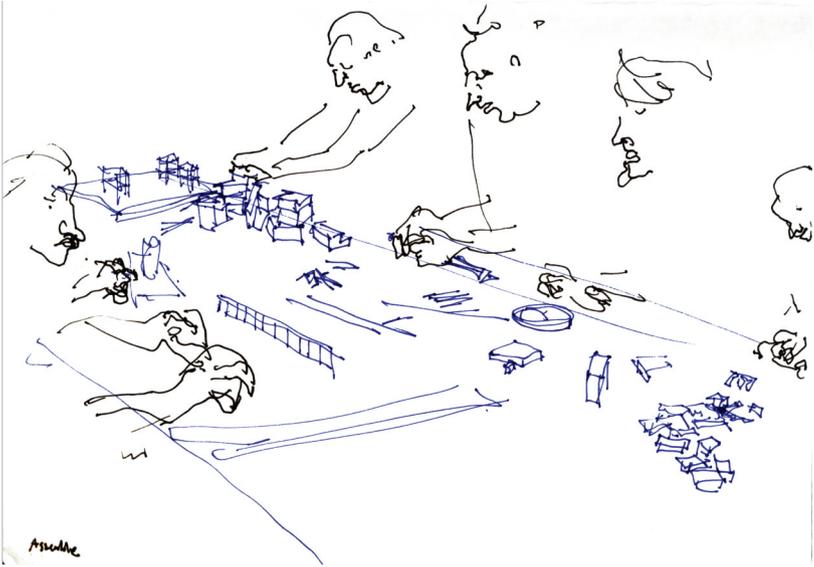


During the process they referred to the functions of the rooms they worked out from the previous week, which also happen to have been made on square post-it stickers arranged on a board. Blocks and squares...



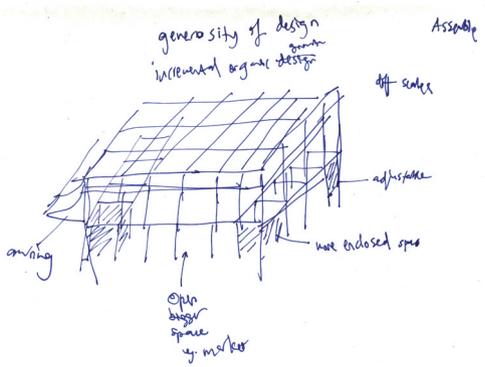
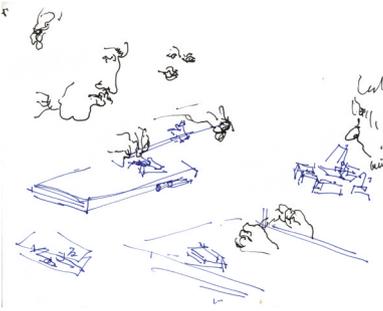
The discussion involves lots of waving hands. Someone would say: 'the kitchen needs to be next to the toilets,' or 'we need to make the rooftop because that's where free activities could happen.'





Muller

I returned the day before the presentation: an assembly line formed, each person doing one part of the production line. cutting the raw material into small parts, assembling into the components, putting them together into the final model...

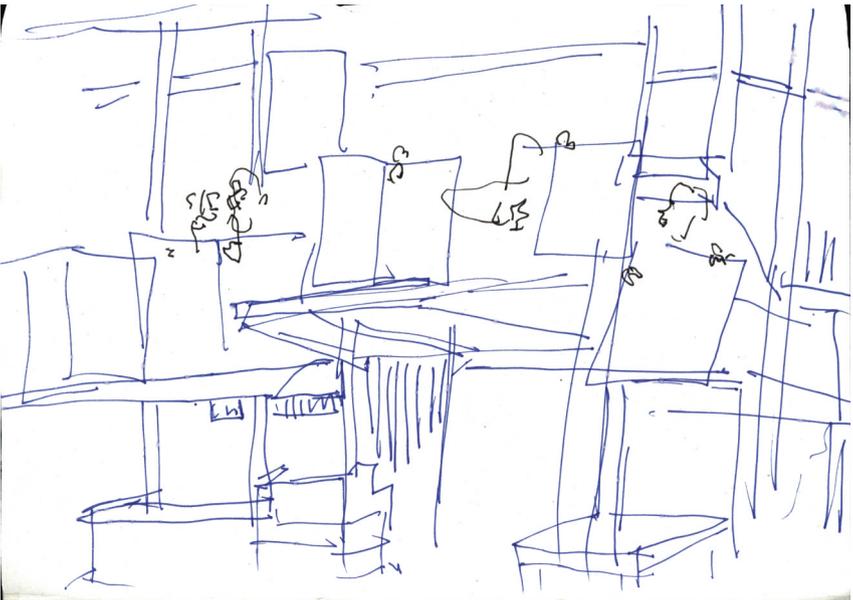
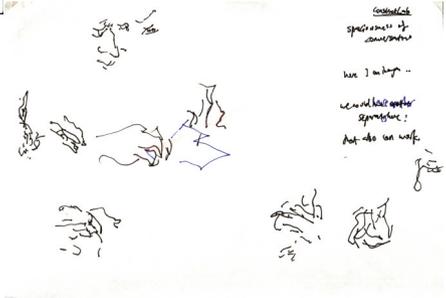


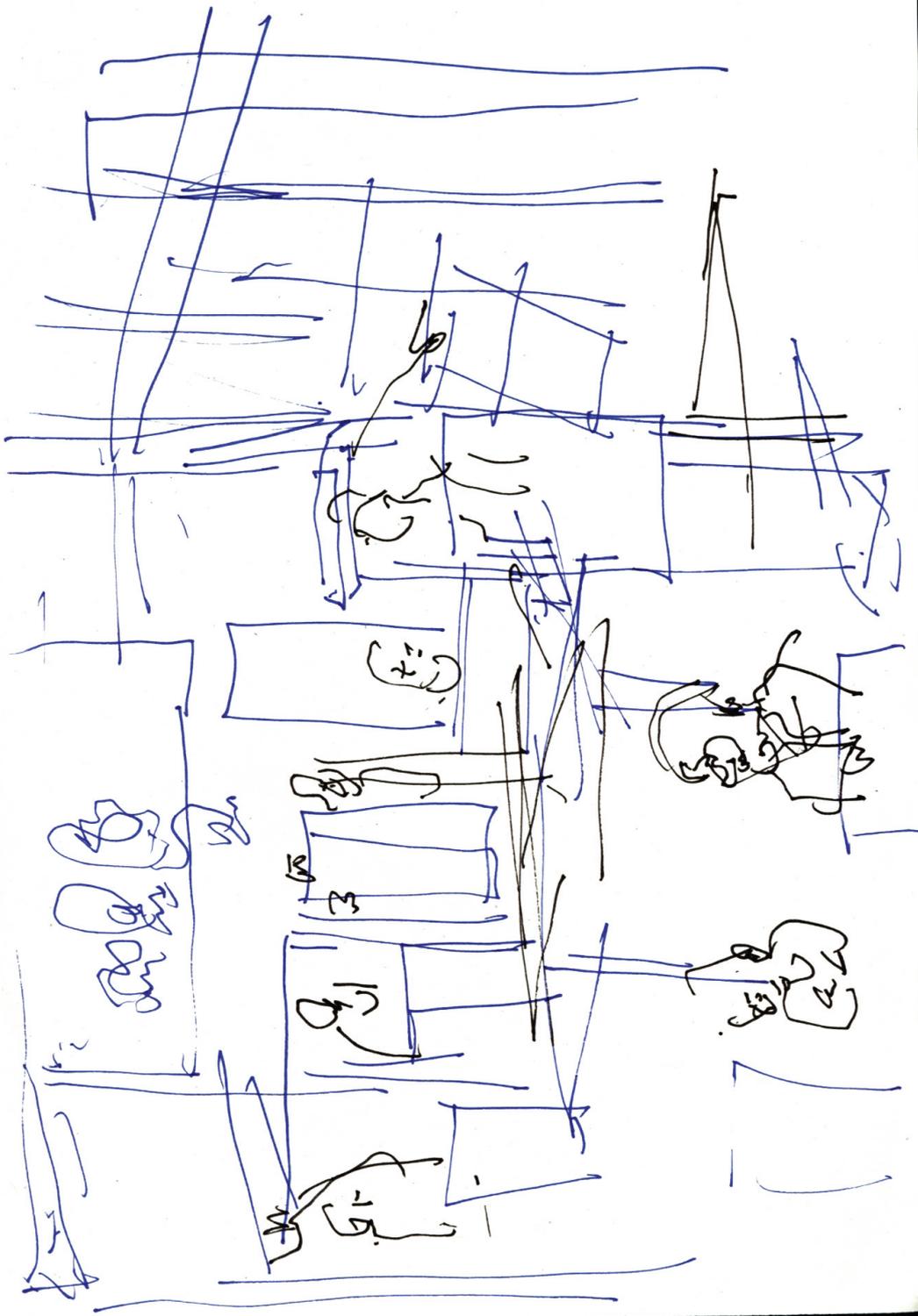
ConstructLab

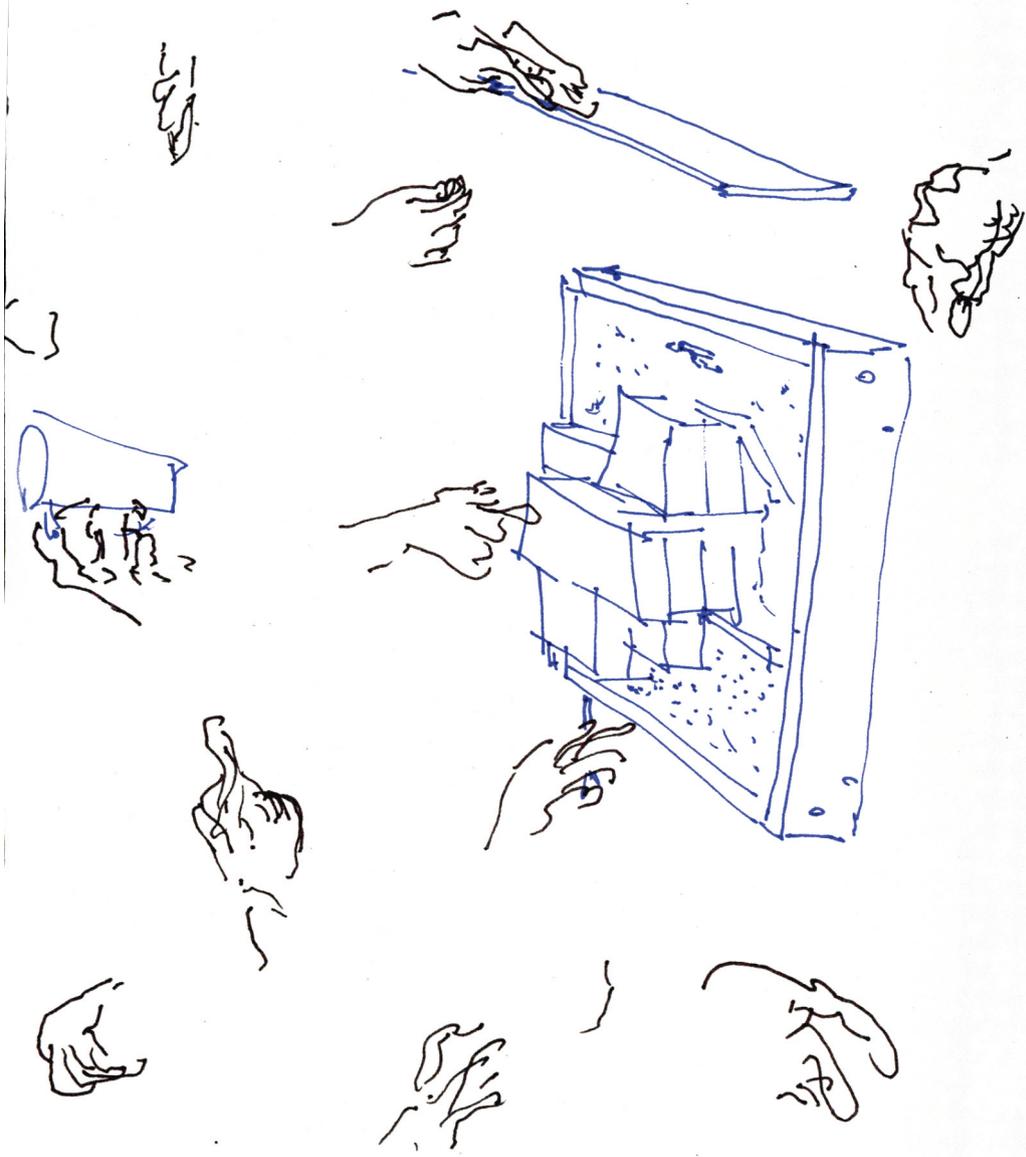


'Here I can imagine...'

The final presentation had the feeling of an orchestra: a conductor speaks, then each person has a position and a role, scattered on the structure outside—built by ConstructLab the previous summer.







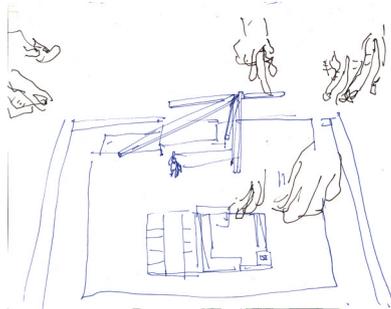
Bromsky Architekten

'we propose one solution and we can change it again'



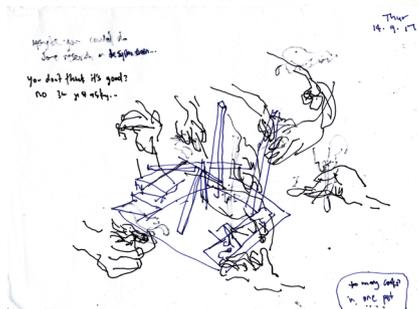
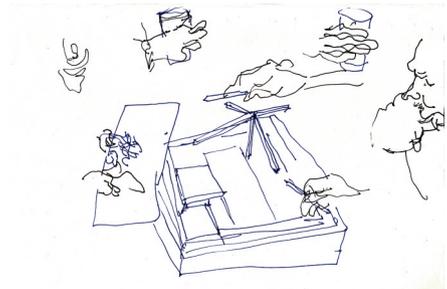
'for me, this becomes the hearth of the house'

'maybe it would make sense to think about it as a whole...'



'you don't think it's good?' 'No, I'm just asking...'

'would you like to sketch out some ideas for the kitchen?'
'maybe you could do some research on the Syrian oven?'





debates, serious contemplation

Presentation: clear, abstract, essence, reductive

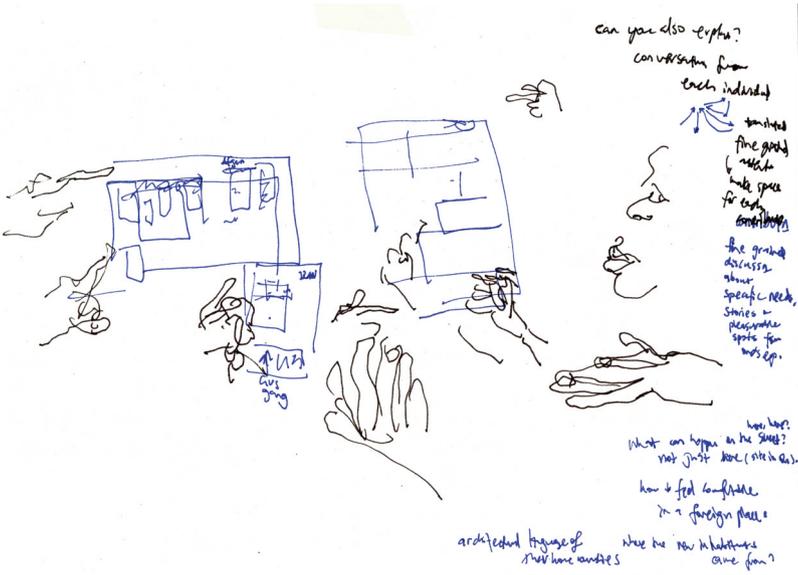


Atelier Bow Wow

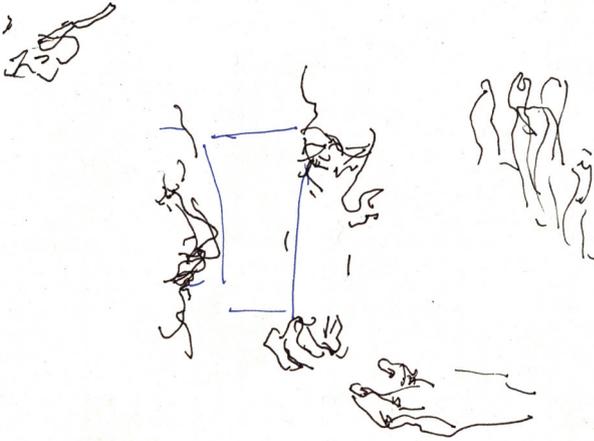
I asked Tomatsu if he had done similar projects before. He said they did something in New Mexico, not as architecture, but building furniture with a local community (and he loves Mexican food). He said he had lived for the past seven years in the US, and recently relocated to Zurich. He was curious: how to feel comfortable in a new place?

'Can you draw to help me understand...?'

To start: drawing a self-introduction, me, my family, what do we do? My home where I used to live, how did I used to live? What were the surrounding streets like?



Each person's drawings were put on the walls, then we go through them one by one, each person gets to talk about her/his drawing,



Talking through translation is slow (one story translated through three people, helping each other), but we have plenty of time...

gentle, meandering conversations drawing out the details and things not drawn.

Sharing our own lives, past, culture, and following our own curiosity to understand the other. In this slow, gentleness, trust began to open up between the strangers. An atmosphere that allowed diverse voices. A spacious common ground to build from.

The 'architect' is a fellow human being, just like me.

'Can you also explain this?'

Fine-grained discussion about specific needs, stories from personal experiences.



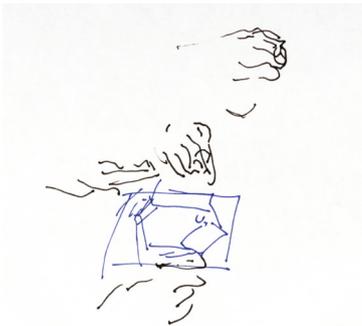
'So, many houses have two living rooms?'

'Do you often have guests?'

'So, there are often festival days where people get together, guests would come and sleep in the living room?'

'This is what is missing here...'

'What do you feel about having a guest room in the community centre?'



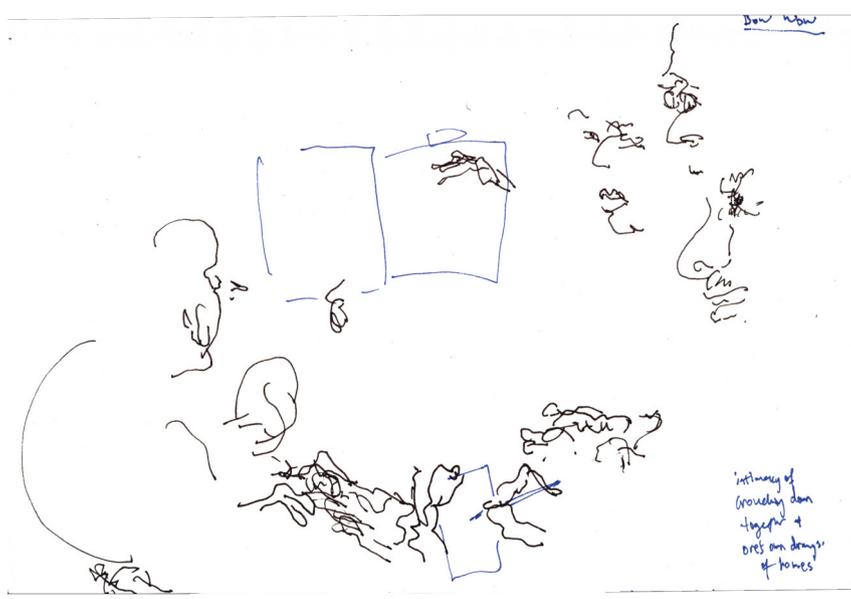
'Could you also explain this part? What do you do here?'

'Is there any different between this and this?'

'I like that you can make shoes.'

'How can we facilitate the exchange of skills?'

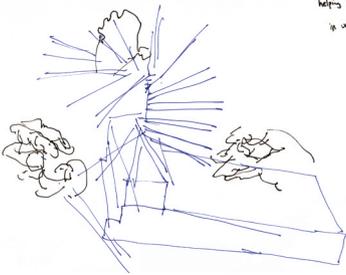
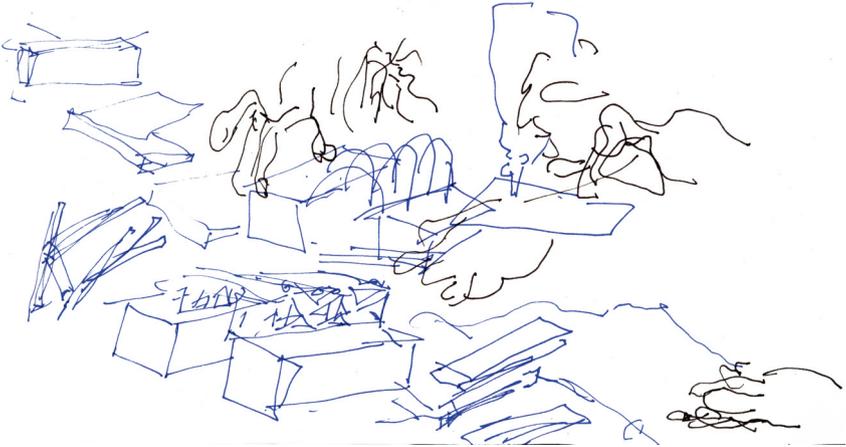
'What can happen on the street, here, here and here (in-between the apartments)? Not just on the site?'



As we reach the drawings close to the ground, the group is crouching down together. There is a kind of intimacy in this informality.

'Personally I feel it is impossible to include everything... we don't have to make it a fight... I hope this could be an open-ended thesis to discuss...'

Making days: Each person could making something, quietly, in their own space and time



helping each other
in various ways

'Fahim is good at making prototypes'

'Could you do this please?'

'Thank you'

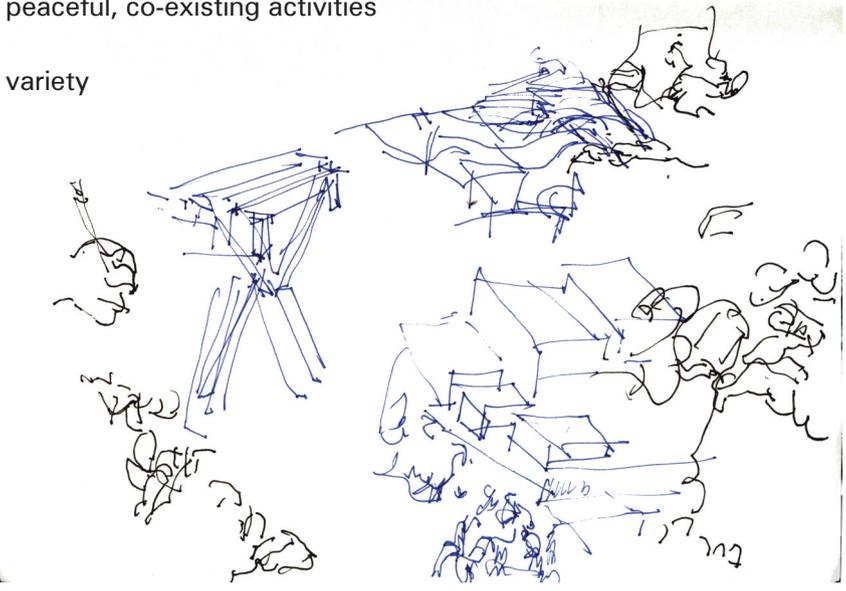


feelings of
gentleness, care

spacious enough to help each other

peaceful, co-existing activities

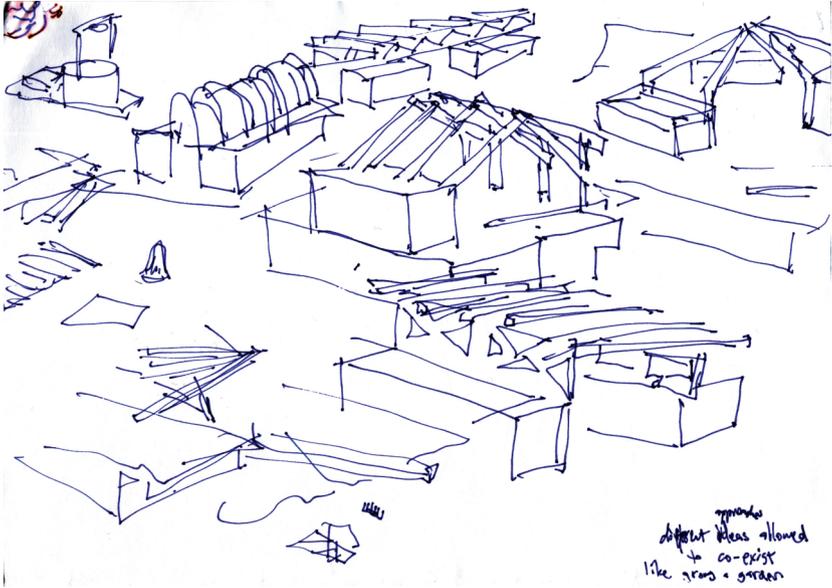
variety



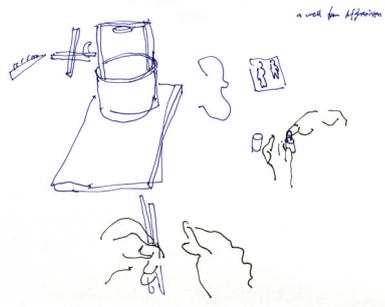
One idea does not cancel out another different one, but could co-exist along, or add to each other

Allow ideas to grow and divaricate to more ideas

'Let's draw as much as possible and see how they go'



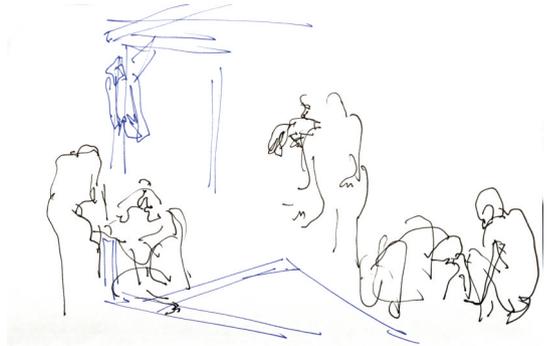
each person's gift acknowledged and appreciated, even the surprising ones proudly displayed with dignity



proud well from Afghanistan, appreciated

After working with models, Saad decided he wanted to make something with the wood materials. Soon, a small wooden house was proudly brought into the studio. It was appreciated with wonder and delight, and proudly displayed.

Saad went on to make a 1:1 model inbetween the containers outside, with the help of fellow team members, for the final presentation.

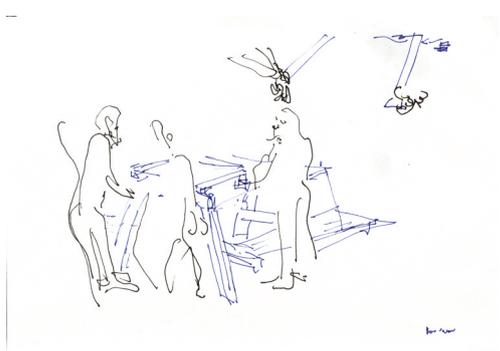
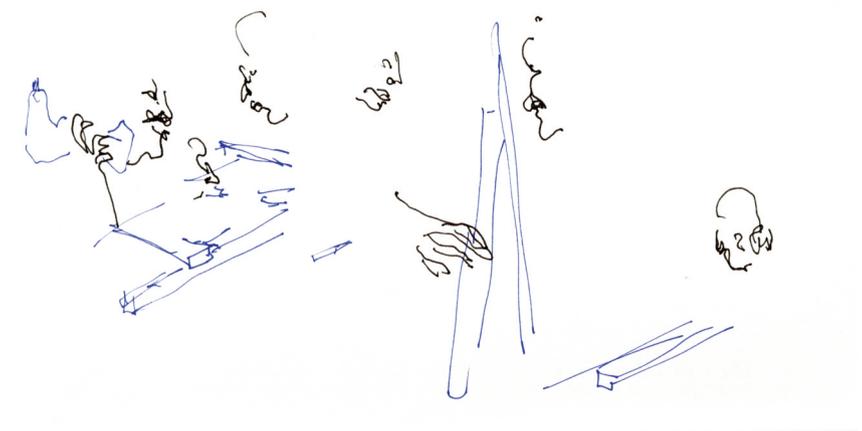


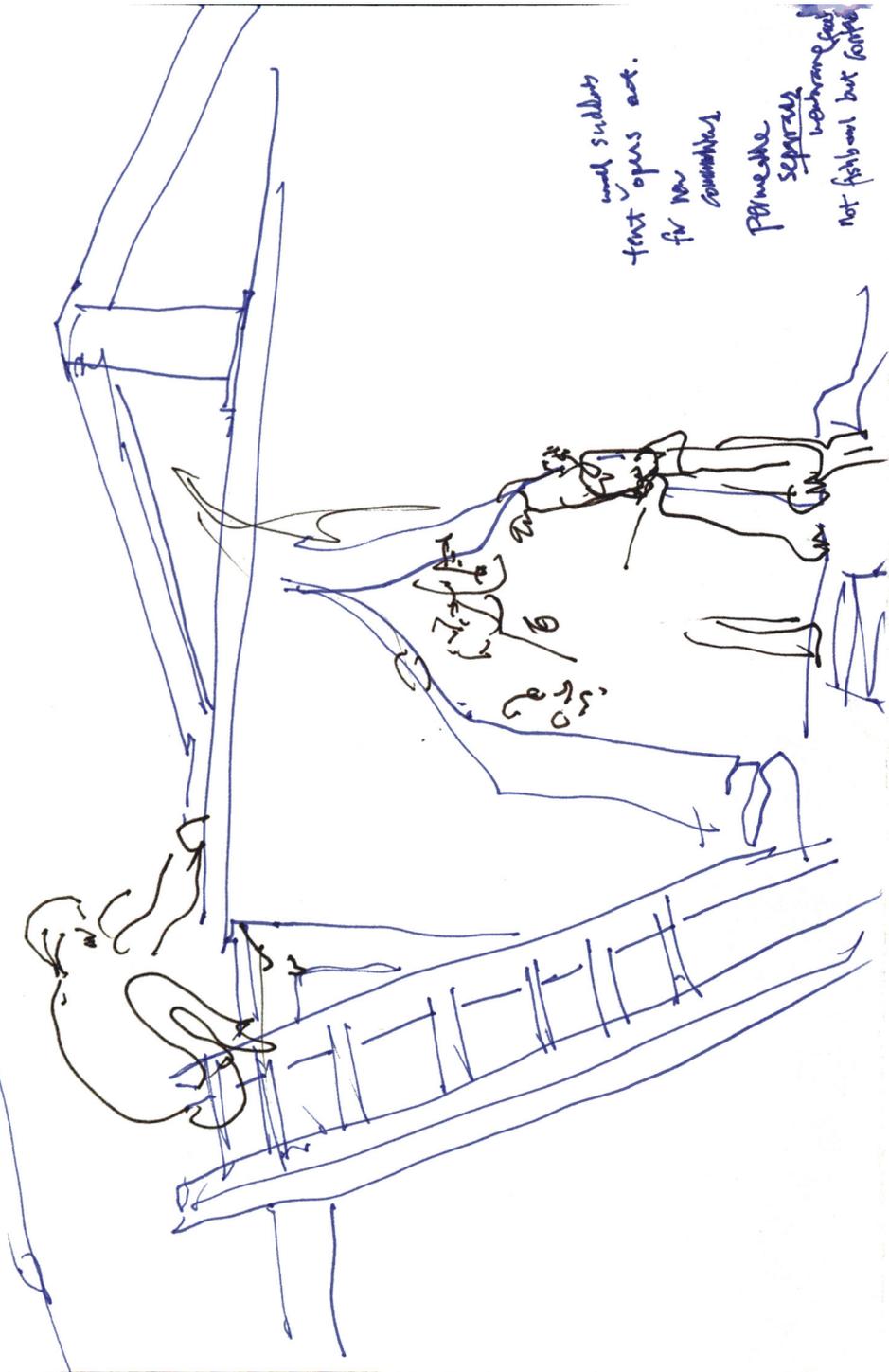
outdoor workshop:

when you are making something that is bigger than yourself, you need help from others.

the material embodies the connection between people

hands connected through materials





wind supports
tent opens aut.

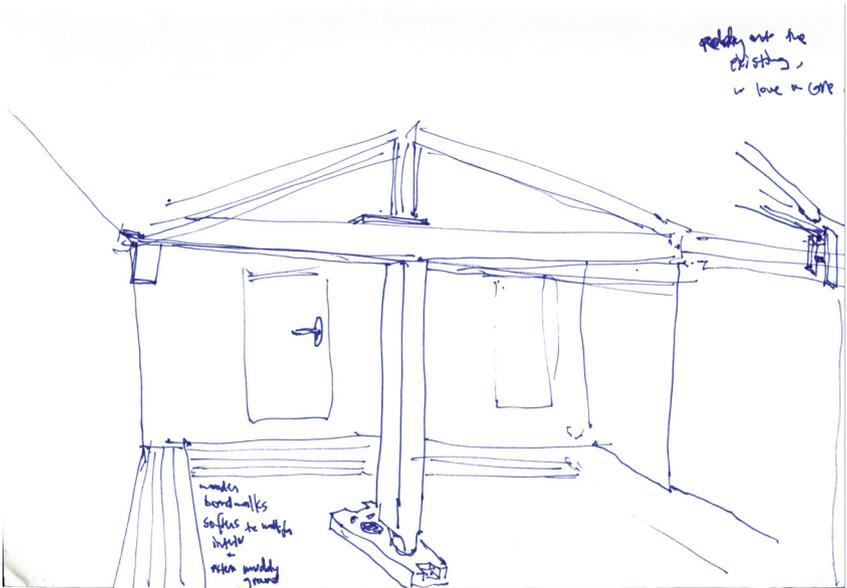
fr NW
southerly

Parrot
separately

we're good
not fishbowl but for the

different scales:

suddenly the tent opens, an empty space became a courtyard, a living room, a hiding nook



presentation:

show everything, with pride

'Our team is made up of people from many different backgrounds, with very different skills, and this is very important.'

The goal was to come up with a proposal for building a community house, to be self-build by the future users. I was told that this competition format is common in architecture, but the situation is unusual in having them work in the same space concurrently.

personal observations from

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from xin cheng

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